

MAINE FIRE PROTECTION SERVICES COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES SEPTEMBER 8, 2003

Chief Darrel Fournier called the Maine Fire Protection Services Commission to order at 1:00pm at the Maine Emergency Medical Services conference room, Edison Drive, Augusta, Maine. Members present were Michael Albert, Jay Bradshaw, Representative Thomas Bull, Chief Jeffrey Cammack, Art Cleaves, John Dean, Representative Robert Duplessie, Chief Darrel Fournier, Albert Godfrey, Sr., Geoffrey Maker, Senator Richard Nass, Harty Norris, David Wacker, Steve Willis and Susan Pinette (staff). Members absent included Jack Berry, Senator Bruce Bryant, John Cannon, Edward Johnston, Chief Jethro Pease and Bill Williams. Vicki Schmidt of the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) attended the meeting as guest of the Fire Commission.

A motion by Harty Norris, seconded by Steve Willis, to accept the minutes of March 3, 2003 and August 4, 2003. The motion passed unanimously.

Fire Commission members discussed the correct reference in the minutes of the director and/ or designee. Future minutes will indicate if the designee is attending the meeting in place of the director.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Training Facilities: A GPS map of the Training Facilities Committee's survey results was distributed to Fire Commission members. Vicki Schmidt was able to produce the map and other information using the data from 185 returned survey forms. The Training Facilities committee intends to use this information in their final report to the Fire Commission. Members of the Fire Commission were impressed with the visual display and inquired whether Ms. Schmidt could produce larger display maps for future presentations.

OLD BUSINESS

Fire Commission members were updated on the status of the appointments to fill the three vacancies on the Fire Commission. The three positions to be filled include one member of the House of Representatives, an insurance representative and the Governor's representative. Members learned that Speaker Colwell was appointing Representative Pat Blanchette of Bangor to the Fire Commission. The Governor's staff has also received two names for the final two positions and hopes to make final appointments prior to the October Fire Commission meeting.

Members learned that South Berwick, chosen by the Fire Commission for a "Best Practices Award" at the September meeting, has withdrawn their

sprinkler ordinance under pressure from town contractors and lack of support from the Fire Chief.

A motion by Mike Albert, seconded by Steve Willis, to send a letter to South Berwick's town manager expressing the Fire Commission's disappointment with the town of South Berwick for recently rescinding their sprinkler ordinance. The letter will also notify South Berwick of the Fire Commission's revocation of their "Best Practices Award" due to their rescinding the ordinance and therefore no longer qualifying for the award.. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion by Tom Bull, seconded by John Dean, to rescind the "Best Practices Award" to South Berwick voted by the Fire Commission at the August meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

Fire Commission members also agreed to send a copy of the letter to the South Berwick Fire Chief and to encourage the Maine Fire Chiefs and other organizations to work positively on this issue.

Members heard about the presentation of the "Line of Duty Death Benefit" to Mrs. Edith Wentzell, widow of Mexico fire captain, Harding Wentzell, and mother of Mexico's fire chief, Gary Wentzell. A short discussion followed regarding the pros and cons of keeping a historical record of the recipients of the line of duty death benefit, to record names or numbers only, the statistical benefits and whether line of duty deaths should be memorialized.

The next item of business was the issue of red lights and sirens for volunteers. A letter from the Legislature's Transportation Committee referring the issue of lights and sirens to the Fire Commission for their recommendations. Members agreed to devote time at the October and November meetings to hear testimony and discuss the issue. The Fire Commission expects to finalize their recommendations to the Transportation Committee at the December meeting.

The Fire Commission discussed the planning of the Spring Conference. Members agreed to hold the conference on March 11, 2004 at the Augusta Armory. The tentative title for the event is "The Blaine House Conference on Emergency First Response". The one-day event will include a morning session with a keynote speaker and afternoon breakout sessions. The choice of keynote speaker resulted in much discussion and the final consensus was to attempt to schedule Tom Ridge, Secretary of Homeland Security. If Secretary Ridge is unavailable, the Fire Commission will consider a panel discussion on the first responders' relationship with local, county, state and federal governments. Six organizations will sponsor the afternoon workshops- Maine Emergency Management Agency (MEMA), Maine Fire Training and Education (MFT&E), State Fire Marshal's Office (SFMO), Department Of Labor, Bureau of Labor Standards (BLS), Maine Emergency Medical Services (MEMS) and the insurance industry. The afternoon workshops will be 45 minutes each, enabling participants to attend a variety of subjects. Lunch and breaks will be provided. The Fire Commission's legislative reception at the Ground Round will be scheduled for

March 10th (the evening before the conference) to coincide with the Spring Conference.

Chief Fournier notified members that he had submitted an article on behalf of the Fire Commission in the Maine Firefighter. The Maine Firefighter is a quarterly newsletter and the Fire Commission expects to submit an article for each issue.

NEW BUSINESS

The Fire Commission will meet with Governor Baldacci on Monday, October 6th at the State House at 1:00pm. The regular monthly meeting will follow the meeting with the Governor. The issues for discussion will include the Penflex study and reports (length of service award programs and incentives for volunteers), healthcare (Governor's healthcare program) and permanent funding sources for the State Fire Marshal's Office and Maine Fire Training and Education. The Fire Commission will also discuss the availability of the Governor at the Maine Fire Service Day at the State House (January 2004) and the Spring Conference (March 11, 2004). Fire Commission members were reminded to wear uniforms at the October meeting.

Fire Commission members were informed that the Gary Cole Foundation has donated thermal imaging cameras to 131 communities in Maine in addition to many other contributions to Maine's fire service.

A motion by Harty Norris, seconded by Dave Wacker, to forward the recommendation of the Gary Cole Foundation to the "Best Practices Award" committee for their consideration. The motion passed unanimously.

Fire Commission members discussed the benefits of forming a legislative fire/EMS caucus. Members agreed that a caucus of state legislators interested in promoting fire service issues would be beneficial.

A motion by Steve Willis, seconded by Al Godfrey, to support the formation of a fire/EMS caucus within the Maine Legislature and to encourage the five legislative members of the Maine Fire Protection Services Commission to work on establishing the caucus. The motion passed unanimously.

Fire Commission members decided to sponsor another "Day at the State House" and agreed on Thursday, January 22nd (Tuesday, January 20th as an alternate date). Members learned the Legislative Council may decide not to permit lunches in the Hall of Flags; however, the Fire Commission will provide refreshments if allowed.

A draft outline of the annual report was distributed and members were encouraged to make any changes or suggestions.

Members were informed of the September 11th ceremony at the Blaine House. There will be a military honor guard, the Governor will speak and the bell on the State House grounds will be rung.

Fire Commission members also agreed on the following meeting schedule:

Monday, October 6, 2003	Regular meeting	1:00pm	State House
Monday, November 3, 2003	Regular meeting	1:00pm	MEMS
Monday, December 1, 2003	Regular meeting	1:00pm	MEMS
Monday, October 6, 2003	Training Facilities	10:00am	MEMS
Monday, November 3, 2003	Training Facilities	10:00am	MEMS

With no further business to come before the Maine Fire Protection Services Commission, Chief Fournier adjourned the meeting at 2:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan M.Pinette